

REMARKS

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner, namely the subject matter recited in Claims 2-14. The forgoing amendment amends Claim 1 and cancels Claims 2, 15, and 16 to place the application in condition for allowance. Now in the application are Claims 1, 3-14, and 17 of which Claims 1 and 3 are independent. The amendments present no new matter, and they present no new issues. Thus, consideration of the proposed amendments requires no further search. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection, and place the presently pending claims as identified above, in condition for allowance.

Rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102:

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,406,982 of Urakami, *et al.* (hereinafter “Urakami”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the above amendments and contend that Urakami does not anticipate amended Claim 1.

Claim 1 is amended to recite the allowable subject matter of Claim 2. The above amendment cancels Claim 2. In the Office Action, the subject matter of Claim 2 is identified as being allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Hence, Urakami does not anticipate, teach or suggest the subject matter of amended Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Rejection of Claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,574,008 of Rice (hereinafter “Rice”) in view of Urakami. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as being moot because the above amendment cancels Claim 15. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Rejection of Claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Urakami in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,438,215 of Tihanyi (hereinafter “Tihanyi”). Claim 17 depends from amended independent Claim 1 and therefore incorporates the patentable features of amended Claim 1. Hence, Claim 17 is patentable for at least the same reasons set forth above regarding amended Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks set forth above, Applicants contend that Claims 1, 3-14, and 17 are presently pending in the application, are patentable and in condition for allowance. If the Examiner deems that there are any remaining issues, we invite the Examiner to call the undersigned at 617-227-7400.

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Respectfully submitted,

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